

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	17/11/2009
Inspector	Deirdra Keating
Type of setting	Childminder

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the childminding

The childminder was registered in 1998. She lives with her husband and children, aged 12 and 15 years, in Bracon Ash, Norfolk. The whole of the childminder's home is used for childminding, with the exception of the master bedroom.

The childminder is registered to care for a maximum of six children under eight years at any one time, no more than three of which may be in the early years age range. She is currently minding four children in this age group. The children live in the local area and some also attend sessions at local pre-schools. The childminder works closely with her husband who is also a registered childminder. Although the childminder is responsible for daily record keeping, she shares overall responsibility for the childminding practice with her co-childminder. When working together, they may care for a maximum of eight children aged under eight years. The childminder also offers care to children aged over five years to 11 years. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The childminder collects children from the local schools.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The childminder provides exceptionally well for children within the Early Years Foundation Stage. An extremely well-developed knowledge of each child's individual needs ensures that children's welfare and learning are promoted with great success. Children thrive in the welcoming and inclusive family home where they make excellent progress towards the early learning goals. Highly effective partnerships between parents and local settings are significant in making sure that children's needs are consistently met. The childminder strives to improve her practice and uses training very well to provide her with the inspiration and motivation to continually improve outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- developing contacts with groups and amenities in the local area to help children establish links in the community and find out more about their environment.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The childminder manages her childminding practice extremely well to ensure children are fully safeguarded. Clear safeguarding procedures and risk assessments are comprehensively understood and implemented by the childminder to ensure children can play safely and their well-being is prioritised. Children's welfare is significantly enhanced by the exceptional organisation of well-written policies and procedures. The childminder works closely with her co-childminder, but takes overall responsibility for the management of the provision. Children experience high levels of support and attention because the childminder is careful to ensure she cares for an appropriate number of children at any one time and uses her assistant very well to enable children's established home routines to be complimented. For example, working closely with her assistant means that sleeping children are not disturbed to collect older children from school. The childminder uses a wide range of high quality resources that are clean, safe and suitable for the ages of children to support their learning and development in her warm, welcoming and homely environment.

The childminder has high aspirations for her practice and that of her co-childminder. Together they have worked hard to provide an insightful evaluation of the service they jointly provide. The childminder has taken active steps to involve parents in this process. She has used questionnaires to gain their views and from these has targeted specific areas for improvement. Additionally parents make written comments in children's diaries and feel able to contact the approachable childminder and discuss their concerns at any time. Children's parents and carers are kept exceptionally well-informed about their progress. Regular newsletters include information regarding activities, events, illness and forthcoming events. This is extended further in children's daily diaries which are illustrated with photographs and an overview of activities and routines. Further details of each child's individual progress towards the early learning goals are recorded in individual learning journeys and shared regularly with parents. Parents record their positive comments about children's consistent progress and provide valuable information from home to enable the childminder to provide activities that compliment their home life experiences. Effective partnership working is also extended to other local providers that children attend. The childminder cares for children who attend several settings and has taken a proactive approach in introducing herself to children's other key practitioners. This enables her to share children's development and any other relevant information in order to meet children's individual needs and provide consistent continuity of care.

The childminder has an unquestionable commitment to improvement and this is a key strength of her setting. She believes unreservedly that in order to meet children's individual needs, improvement and change are key factors. The childminder has a positive, open-minded approach and strives continually for improvement with outcomes for children central to the process. The introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage provided many areas in which the childminder has implemented change and adapted areas of her practice in order to fully meet the requirements. The childminder and her co-childminder regularly reflect on their

practice. They discuss the progress individual children make and how they can continue to build on their skills and interests to ensure that all children continue to make good progress towards the early learning goals. The childminder recognises each child's unique qualities and the characteristics they share with other children. She is strongly committed to promoting equality of opportunity and inclusive practice at the setting, ensuring all children and families feel included, safe and valued.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are very warmly welcomed into the childminder's happy family home where they develop a strong sense of belonging and benefit from the positive relationships with her family. Consequently, children feel truly comfortable and thoroughly enjoy their time at the childminder's house. Children receive warm, responsive care from the gentle and calm childminder, who tailors play plans to fit in with each child's individual needs and interests using information gained from observations and children's parents. The childminder uses a two-way communication system to support and extend children's learning and development in her setting and enable parents to be fully involved in the learning process. Each child has a learning journey showing their personal path towards the early learning goals and these are also shared regularly with parents. The childminder recognises the strengths of professional relationships in creating an approach that best meets the needs of individual children. This has been a key factor in her ability to support and include children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and ensure that all children achieve as well as they can, regardless of their background.

The childminder has organised her home exceptionally well to provide a warm and homely environment in which children can actively progress and learn. Children are cared for on the ground floor and use the conservatory dining room, small, cosy sitting room, kitchen and large enclosed garden. The house and garden are reassuring and comforting for all children who have easy access to resources and the garden. This encourages children to make independent choices in their play and consequently children are happy and confident in the stimulating accessible environment. The childminder has developed close and trusting relationships with children and is skilled at judging when they are ready to be taught new skills. Children become increasingly independent and develop self-confidence as they hang up their coats and put on their shoes. The childminder is adept at tuning into children's needs as they play. Children are able to direct their play and use their imaginations as they play with small figures on the floor because the childminder gives children time to think about what they want and to express their wishes, rather than stepping in to help by making decisions for them.

The childminder has a good knowledge of nutrition and plans a healthy and varied menu for the children. For example, a casserole which is freshly prepared in advance cooks throughout the morning and smells appetising. Children thoroughly enjoy their hot meals, which are served with fresh vegetables. They sit at the table and enjoy home-cooked meals, tailored to their individual preferences and likes. Drinks are available at all times and milk or water is offered at meal times. Children

are encouraged to use the garden daily; this offers them the freedom to be physically active and exuberant as they use the larger scale equipment outside. Children can rest and sleep upstairs in a travel cot with fresh bed linen, where they are checked regularly by the childminder to ensure they are safe and comfortable. Children are kept safe and taught about safety when they are out; they fully understand the need for rules and boundaries in order to keep them safe, for example, when walking on the road or using the equipment at the park. Children enjoy trips in the local community and have used the local library and visited the museum. While the childminder values the local community, she would like to make more effective use of the different amenities in the neighbouring community to benefit all of the children.

Children respond positively to challenges as the childminder recognises effort as well as achievement. There are clear house rules and children are encouraged to help with small, achievable tasks. Consequently, children develop positive attitudes to themselves as learners and treat each other with consideration and respect, gaining many new skills which will help them in later life. The childminder helps children embrace differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, special educational needs and disabilities. She proactively uses books, small figures, puzzles and discussion to help children recognise their own unique characteristics and those they share with other children.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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